FAITH, WORKS AND GRACE

BISHOP CHANDLER

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FAITH, WORKS, AND GRACE

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ADDRESSES ON THE SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS

BY

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FAITH, WORKS, AND GRACE

MEDITATION:
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PASSION

"Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready" (St. Luke xxii. 10–12).

OUR Lord Jesus Christ makes the same sort of appeal to us, as we contemplate His Passion. He asks a very little of us: just a place in the common guestchamber, along with others who are accommodated there. He asks that we will not turn Him away altogether, shut the door in His face, and refuse to have anything to do with Him at Passiontide. He stands at the door and knocks, and it is for us to decide whether

to open it at all ; and if so, what to do with Him Who asks for admission. We may do just what He asks : give Him a corner in the guestchamber, and occasionally speak a word to Him, when we are not busy with other guests who may perhaps interest us more.

We may keep Holy Week and Good Friday with a bare minimum of reverence and decency ; do just enough to vindicate our claim to be Christians, but not enough to put ourselves out or to cause ourselves serious pain and discomfort. Or we may be generous in our dealings with Him ; give more than He asks ; not relegate Him to the common guestchamber, but give Him the large upstairs room furnished and prepared : the chief room in our hearts, where He may dwell by Himself, and not as one of many occupants ; and where we may come again and again to hold close, intimate communion with Him ; the inner sanctuary of our soul, to be His private room, where none but He may dwell, and where we may kneel at His feet, and learn something of the meaning and power of His Passion. Let this be what we are trying to do this Passiontide ; great will be our reward. For, when we have once admitted Christ to this inner shrine, it will make all the difference

to our lives. We shall then have a House of Quiet to dwell in; we shall not be continually worried and distracted and upset by the troubles and annoyances of daily life, but shall go about our daily business in perfect freedom of mind. We have got the one thing that matters; nothing can rob us of that; so we can meet all the changes and chances of life with a cheerful face. We have, again, a Stronghold of Defence against temptation; not the power of our own weak wills, but the power of His victorious Love, to be a safeguard and protection. And we have a Shrine of Light, through His presence in us, a divine light to show us the way we should walk in and to illuminate our minds with truth.

These blessings are ours whenever Christ dwells in our hearts; but when He dwells in us at Passiontide, they are ours in a special and peculiar sense. Then the Quiet is the peace of penitence: a penitence in which we renounce all disturbing thoughts of our own rights and privileges and pleasures; penitence which deepens our devotion to Him and makes Him the one supreme object of our love. Then, again, the Stronghold of Defence will be extra strong, when the Christ Who is with us is the Christ Who has encountered all our

temptations, and conquered them, in Himself in Gethsemane. Then, too, the Shrine of Light will glow with peculiar brilliance, when a mortified heart, mortified through union with Christ's sufferings, has accepted Him as its guide through life.

Let us welcome Him, then, with generous love ; give Him the large upper room furnished and prepared ; and make Him the Master of our lives. And let us see to it that our love is a personal love for Christ Himself. The books that we read may help us ; but it is He, not books about Him, that we want. When we have read something about the Passion, we may let that which we have read remain in the background of our heart, as giving a general direction to our thoughts and a general stimulus to our affections ; then we shall pass into the upper room and kneel in silence before Him. We shall not dwell then on any details of the scenes of which we have been thinking ; that has done its work in bringing us to His presence ; what we have to do now is to offer Him our repentance and our love and our desire to serve Him.

Here, as in all meditation, there must be a balance between God's action and our own. God

does His part and we do ours ; we prepare the soil, and God sows the seed. As a rule we find it easy to recognize this principle in regard to the Sacraments. There, God's gift is obvious ; and equally obvious is the need of preparation on our part. But in the matter of Prayer it is not so ; there, we want to do everything, and leave nothing for God to do.

It may possibly be answered that we do our part in asking for what we want, and God does His in sending it to us. But that is a very crude sort of partnership. We must remember that Prayer does not consist merely, or mainly, in asking God for definite gifts ; it is rather the entering into an intercourse with God, an intercourse which is gradually to become closer and more intimate. It is talking to God in language which is gradually to become simpler and less constrained. And in this intercourse itself there is something for us and something for God to do. We ask a question, and He answers ; He makes known His will, and we undertake to do it. "Does this mean," we shall be asked, "that we are to expect supernatural experiences, the hearing of voices and the seeing of visions?" No ; it just means that God causes an idea to emerge, to grow, to gather

strength in our mind, to reveal itself as God's will for us. Or, again, we need not even be asking a definite question; it may be rather that we just present ourselves to God as instruments to be used in His service, and ask Him to show us the way in which He will be pleased to use us. Having thus humbly offered ourselves to Him, we must pause and see what sort of practical suggestions arise in our minds and wills. It may be just the name of someone whom we ought to go to visit.

"But how are we to know that the idea which arises is really God's message? How are we to distinguish between our own notions and a revelation of God's will?" Surely this is a matter in which we ought not to try to make any absolute distinction. It is not the case that, say, a hundred notions will be entirely unsanctified ideas of our own, and the hundred and first an undiluted message from God. Rather, God is always living and working within us, when we are in earnest with our religion; He is always shaping and directing our thoughts and ideals in accordance with His will. The perfect result of such action would be that "he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit": a state of things in which every notion and idea would be in perfect con-

formity with God's will, and a perfect expression of that will. With us, the message is dimmed and adulterated by self-will ; but the more humble we are, and the more sincere in our self-oblation, the more plainly will God control and govern and inspire our thoughts. So in meditation we may consider our thoughts as guided by, and gradually conformed to, God's will ; or of God's message gradually making its way to us through the obstacles of our own self-will.

This "vocation" is just the opposite of our "choice." We choose the things that interest us most ; but here, when we put ourselves at God's orders, things we habitually neglect will come forward. All this means that in Prayer, as intercourse with God, we must be quiet and wait upon Him. It is certainly hard to do this ; hard just because it is so simple. We find it extraordinarily difficult to be simple ; we cannot wait quietly in God's presence ; we must be constantly worrying about things, giving God a great deal of information, explaining what we want Him to tell us to do, formulating reasons for loving and obeying Him, which ought to be as unnecessary for us as for a child in the presence of his mother.

Let us assume that we believe in God and love

Him, and think rather of serving Him : "Shew Thou me the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto Thee." Let us concentrate our attention on the will, as distinct from the reason and the affections ; and we shall find that, as we gradually come to serve Him better, we shall also be coming to believe in Him and love Him better.

Prayer, then, is intercourse with God, and requires intervals of silence, in which He may make known His commands ; and it is practical in object, being focussed on the service of God.

It follows that in Prayer we are to aim at giving rather than at getting ; we are concerned not with receiving even spiritual satisfaction or spiritual pleasure, but with offering ourselves to God's service. A good meditation is not one in which we have experienced most delight, or in which we are conscious of having entertained exalted thoughts, but one in which we have most humbly and contritely committed ourselves to God as instruments to be used by Him at His will.

This does not mean that we are to make our minds a blank, or that we are to try to think of nothing, which is an utter impossibility ; rather, we are to think intensely of God, of the coming of

His kingdom and the doing of His will. And so, at Passiontide, we shall be concentrating our attention on our suffering Saviour, suffering with Him in honest repentance, and longing to make Him some reparation for His sufferings by the sincerity and fervour of our allegiance.

May our consideration of the Words from the Cross help towards this offering of ourselves as a "reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice" to His service.

We can think of the Gospel story, and especially the story of the Passion, in different ways, and from different points of view.

(1) We may contemplate the example of a perfect life of unsullied holiness and absolute unselfishness, a life unswervingly devoted to the love of God and man. And we may set this example before ourselves as an ideal, as the goal which we aim at and wish to attain to. The example of Christ shames us and stimulates us; it is the standard by which we test ourselves, and by which we test also the opinions and judgments and ways of thought which are current amongst us. So, particularly at Passiontide, we contemplate the example of His humility and patience, His self-

restraint under insult, His endurance of physical and mental agony, the meekness and gentleness in which He was led as a lamb to the slaughter; and we apply this to ourselves and pray the prayer of Palm Sunday: "Almighty and everlasting God, Who, of Thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility; mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also be made partakers of His resurrection."

Certainly it is a very profitable use to make of the story of the Passion, thus to set before ourselves the example of Christ's patience, and ask for grace to imitate that example. It will make us ashamed of our own impatient, uncontrolled, rebellious, bad-tempered, selfish lives, and help us to set up before us a truer and purer standard and ideal of life. And perhaps in the case of those who are young and self-confident and have been saved by God's providence from bad faults, the story of the Passion will come before them mainly in that aspect, as setting up an example which they recognize as perfect and

which they can cheerfully and hopefully set themselves to follow. They are not aware of leaden weights which drag them back, nor disheartened by repeated and disastrous failure to walk in His footsteps. They are thrilled by the glory of that life and are confident that its beauty and its grandeur will sustain them in their attempts to imitate it—to follow the example of His patience till they are made partakers of His resurrection.

(2) But as we grow in the knowledge and understanding of ourselves, we see that the matter is not so simple as that. We come to share the insight of St. Paul into the complexity of human nature. We recognize with him that the law, the law of Christ's example, is holy, and the command that we should follow it holy and just and good. But then this law is spiritual, and "I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law [of Christ's example] that it is good. . . . To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil that I would not, that I do. . . . I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil

is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man : but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"[1]

In these words we are brought face to face with another aspect of Christ's work, and especially of His Death and Passion. It is not enough for us to set up the example of His holy life and perfect obedience, and then cheerfully and confidently set out to imitate it. That example appeals, indeed, to all that is best and noblest in us, and we delight in it after the inner man, recognizing that the law of that life is holy and just and good. But we find—all of us in some measure, whilst those who have had most experience of evil feel it most keenly—that we are powerless to attain to that which we admire, to be loyal to that which we delight in, to act up to that which we believe in. There is the other law, the law of sinful impulses and ingrained habits, the law of a carnal nature sold under sin, the law which makes us the bond-

[1] Rom. vii. 14-25.

slaves of iniquity at the very time that, after the inner man, we enthusiastically accept the ideals and the laws of the Christian life. The Greeks in their lighthearted optimism had declared that as soon as a man knew what was right, he always performed it ; that virtue was knowledge ; that you only had to set the true ideal before a man and he would follow it ; if he acted differently, wrongly, it was only through ignorance of the good. And on that view the sole significance of the life and death of Christ would consist in the true example which He set ; and the sole work of the Christian Church would be to paint with glowing colours the picture of that example, in the certain hope that all who recognized its goodness would surely and instinctively and consistently follow it. But St. Paul knows better than that ; he knows that a man may intellectually, æsthetically, spiritually even, recognize and accept all the truth and all the glory of Christ's life, and yet through the power of sin be dragged back from following it ; "for what I would, that I do not ; but what I hate, that do I."

Now, this means that Christ's work has another, and an enormously important, aspect : it is not only an *example to be imitated by us,* but

also *a deliverance effected for us,* a deliverance which is to be thankfully accepted, and which will set us free to return to God with loving and loyal hearts. And this work of deliverance is what we call Redemption. We are carnal, sold under sin, and must be redeemed, or bought back into freedom at the price of Christ's blood. We are not to press the metaphor of buying and selling unduly ; the simple and deep meaning is that Christ, at the cost of unimaginable suffering and self-sacrifice, has delivered us from the bondage to evil. So when we feel tied and bound with the chain of our sins, when we are appalled by the strength of temptation and disheartened by the memory of past failures and relapses, the mere contemplation of Christ's example will not be a message of hope but rather a message of despair to our souls. That is just what we should like to be, what we might once have been, but what it is now for ever impossible for us to become. What at such times we want to find, what it will comfort us to find, in Christ, is not simply a holy example but a strong Deliverer, a Saviour, a Redeemer. Perhaps to no one has the Passion of Christ meant more than it meant to the penitent thief, but it would have meant

nothing, less than nothing, it would have been a lesson of despair and not of hope to him, if he had seen in that sinless sufferer only an example to be followed by himself, since it was physically impossible for him to go out and follow it. And so as we kneel to-day before the Cross and listen to the words of Christ, we are to think not only of the example of His sinlessness and patience, but also of that act of Redemption which in a divine, mysterious way He is accomplishing by means of those very sufferings.

How do His sufferings redeem us? Because they are a great act of reparation for human sin—"a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." No repentance of ours apart from Christ could have made this act of reparation; because our repentance could never have expressed that whole-hearted hatred of sin which a perfect act of reparation must contain. We can struggle against sin, but we have allowed it to gain such an influence over our hearts that we cannot unreservedly hate and abhor it. We have a secret love of it all the time that we are fighting against it. The only perfect act of reparation for sin could be made by One Who was absolutely sinless, Whose will and

affections had never received a traitor into the camp, but had remained pure and steadfast in their allegiance to God, and Who therefore could feel the sinfulness of sin and hate it with a holy hatred. So we get the strange paradox that the satisfaction is due from sinners, but can only be made by the sinless. By a supreme act of self-sacrificing love, He Who knew no sin is made sin for us, feels sin in all its horror and defilement, hates it utterly and unreservedly, and bears all its penalties and consequences in Gethsemane and on Calvary.

In this way what we could never do was done for us by Christ. We who could never have broken our bonds find them struck off for us. Christ's all-comprehensive sorrows and all-atoning sufferings do for us what could never have been done by any despairing remorse or half-hearted penitence of our own. They are the sacrifice and satisfaction for our sins, freeing us from the burden of their guilt.

(3) But there is one last aspect of the Passion still to be considered. His death is not simply an external transaction accomplished in our stead; it is also an internal process to be enacted in our lives. Christ did not suffer that we might

be spared all suffering. He suffered that we might be enabled to suffer and to be really penitent. He hung upon the Cross, that the Cross might be set up in our hearts and the sin of our nature crucified on it. His sufferings and His sacrifice are to be re-enacted in us by our reception of Him. He is to work within us, and so to mould us after His pattern. We must not, therefore, isolate the redemptive aspect of Christ's sufferings any more than we must isolate their aspect as our example. If we think only of the example we may be reduced to despair; if we think only of the Redemption we may be tempted to apathy and indifference, in the idea that everything has been done for us and nothing is left to be done. The sublime transaction of Redemption, by which Christ did for us what we could never have done for ourselves, must not be abstracted, as though it contained in itself the whole meaning of His work. It is carried on and completed by becoming a transforming power of penitence and devotion in our own lives. The forgiveness is to be taken up and carried forward into a new life—"He died that we might be forgiven; He died to make us good."

Thus, besides Christ our Example, and Christ

our Redeemer, we have to consider Christ our Life, as we contemplate the scenes of the Passion, and listen to the words from the Cross. And when we think of Christ crucified as our Life, the other two aspects of His work are brought together: His redemptive sufferings work within us as a power enabling us to follow His example. The example ceases to be an impossible ideal filling us with despair as we look at it; by the power of Christ's Passion working in us we are enabled to tread in His footsteps. And those redemptive sufferings of His are no external transaction in which we are destitute of part or share; they are re-enacted in us and become our imitation of our Master.

It is, of course, in Holy Communion that the sufferings and sacrifice of Christ are, by divine ordinance, brought within our own lives. The Body and Blood which we then receive are the Body broken and the Blood poured out upon the Cross. That must be so, because it is only as the sin-bearer that we can receive Him; it is only Christ crucified, crucified for our sin, Whom we sinners can receive. It is the sacrifice of Christ that we receive as the food of our own souls. Thus the redemptive work and the sacramental

work of Christ are indissolubly connected; the sacrifice on the altar is the continuance and the application to us of the sacrifice upon the Cross. Always we must think of the Sacrament in relation to the sacrifice; the Sacrament as making the sacrifice a reality to ourselves, a power in our own lives; making the sufferings of Christ the life of our own souls, and thereby enabling us to feel and to suffer and to repent. Our meditations on the Passion are not merely to stir the emotions of sympathy and gratitude for a work done by Christ for us, they are to prepare us to be worthy recipients of the Sacrament in which Christ does His work in us, as each one of us is led to feed his soul on Christ crucified, and thereby to appropriate that hatred of sin which is the essence of repentance and which Christ can communicate to us.

So, as we follow the story of the Passion, we think of Christ, first, as the perfect Example of humility and patience and love, shaming us, stimulating us, and perhaps in the end (if there were no other aspect of the Passion) driving us to despair.

But we think of Him, secondly, as our Redeemer, making for us the great act of repara-

tion that sets us right with God, feeling the results of sin as we can never feel them, hating it as we can never hate it, and paying its penalty to the full that we may be liberated from our bondage and become God's freemen.

We think of Him, thirdly, as our Life, dwelling in us through the Blessed Sacrament, communicating to us the power of sharing His sorrows and making them our own ; giving us the death unto sin, the life hid with Him in God, the life that can imitate His example because it is His own life working and acting within us.

If Calvary, then, is to have its full meaning, it must be followed by Communion. Christ hanging on the Cross as our substitute is followed by Christ dwelling in our hearts as the source of penitential life. Let us remember that whenever we come to make our Communion, it is Christ the Victim, Christ in His sorrows and sufferings that we come to receive as the rule and principle of our own lives, Christ as the power of penitence and the source of sanctification. When we come to Holy Communion we come as sinners who are sorry for their sins, and who come to join their poor half-hearted sorrow to His unspeakable, all-comprehensive sufferings which will purify,

deepen, and strengthen it. Christ on the Cross becomes, in the Sacrament, Christ in us, our Life, our Purification, our bond of union with the Father, our power to follow the example of His life.

I

PRAYER

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (St. Luke xxiii. 34).

OUR Lord's whole life had been devoted to the doing of the Father's will and the salvation of the souls of men, or doing the Father's will in the salvation of human souls. Prayer to God for men had been the atmosphere in which He moved. So that which had been the practice of a lifetime is practised naturally and instinctively in this awful crisis as the nails go through His hands and feet. And if *we* would pray at any great crisis, we must make a habit of prayer in our ordinary life. If we would be able to pray when our own death draws near, or as we kneel by the deathbed of a friend, let us make prayer the atmosphere now in which we dwell. Christ had always thought of others, loved them, commended their needs to the Father; and now

that He is dying for them the words of prayer come naturally to His lips.

God made us in His own image, and prayer is the aspiration of our nature after Him, the upward flicker of the divine spark in us, upwards to God Who placed it there. God made us and put something of His own nature in us, and that something divine in us is groping and feeling and soaring and aspiring after God from Whom it came. That is why prayer can never be entirely abolished, why people who habitually neglect their prayers and deliberately and wilfully give up praying yet lapse back into the words and attitude of prayer when some great danger or trouble comes upon them. But such prayer is selfish, crude, and imperfect because it issues from a blind impulse and not from a disciplined habit. And for us, who say our prayers regularly, how hard we find it to pray!

Prayer is an instinct which can never be entirely lost, but it can very easily be distorted and misused. It ought to be the most real and living thing about us, because it puts us into connection with our Maker, and yet we know how dull and spiritless and mechanical it becomes. Even in the freshness of childhood the prayers which we have

learned by heart are gabbled through hurriedly, whilst our thoughts are far away. And later on, hypocrisy is added to distraction, and we pray automatically for grace to do things that we haven't any intention of trying to do. Distraction and hypocrisy, the pressure of the world and slavery to sin, corrupt and ruin the heaven-born instinct of prayer, until it is either habitually abandoned or survives as a meaningless convention. And then we look at the example of our blessed Lord, and see how prayer was the very breath of His human life. There was a perpetual communing of His soul with the Father, which was the source of all His words, "I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak" (St. John xii. 49, 50). And we know how, after a long day's work, He would seek for rest and recreation in silent communing with God through a night of prayer. His meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him and to finish His work. Or we think of the great Saints who really imitated Christ, and whose lives

became in their turn lives of prayer, prayer for themselves and others, unceasing prayer, which brought heaven and earth together, and formed a Jacob's ladder by which angels of grace could descend to the children of men. And some fools and blind have so utterly lost the sense of the meaning of prayer as to jeer at God's Saints and say, "What a waste of time! why don't they get up and do something useful?"

As if they could do anything more useful than so concentrate their souls on God that they become living wires along which messages of mercy and grace and truth come down to God's people on earth! Why, a Saint whose life is a life of prayer is a far greater philanthropist than the fussy person who serves on a hundred charitable committees, because the good which the Saint brings to men by his prayers is purer, higher, and more durable than that which is aimed at and accomplished by all the societies in the world.

Prayer lifts us above ourselves into union with God, above the worries and changes and chances of existence into a region of eternal peace; prayer was the very life, the work and recreation alike of Christ and of His Saints. Prayer is in fact the very essence of religion, and yet what a mess we

make of it, and what failures we are at it! God is our Father, as well as our Creator; and yet we cannot bear to be ten minutes alone with Him, we cannot fix our minds on Him; our thoughts wander; we must be up and away to some other job. Even on this solemn day, perhaps, we shall find that the two or three minutes after each address for silent prayer are more than we can use for that purpose; we want to be singing the next hymn, or to be reading something—anything rather than to be just talking quietly to God and opening our hearts to Him.

At any rate we shall have made a start when we recognize—(1) that prayer is the most important thing in life, in its effect on ourselves and others; and (2) that, like all great things, it is exceedingly difficult; it requires to be learnt and practised with certainly not less care and perseverance than people give to playing the piano or learning to be a doctor. These are truths, then, that we learn from the example of Christ and His Saints. The upshot may be despair; we are so utterly unlike them, we are so busy, we have so many other things to do—and we are so cold and indifferent to spiritual things.

Well, if that is the result of Christ's example,

let us think what help Christ's work of Redemption, His sufferings and death, can be to us in the matter of prayer. The ultimate reason why we cannot pray better lies in our sins. Our minds are so occupied with thoughts which are in one way or another contrary to God's will — impure thoughts, angry thoughts, thoughts of discontent, of envy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness, that we cannot talk freely to the God Who is Love, can only just mumble through our formal petitions in a shamefaced sort of way, without ever daring really to lift up our hearts to Him. It is sin which causes us to make such a failure of our prayer. But suppose that record of sin to be wiped out, suppose God to say to us, "You have wearied and insulted Me to My face, you have broken one resolution of amendment after another, you have refused to listen to My voice and have rejected every entreaty of My Love, and yet for the sake of My Son Who died for you on the Cross I will wipe out your transgressions and receive you back as My dear children, and your sins and iniquities I will remember no more"—doesn't that make a difference? doesn't that help us in our prayer?

We can think of some little child who is tongue-

tied in the presence of his mother because he has insulted and rejected her affection for him; he dare not speak to her or look at her, but is moody and sullen and silent. Then in a moment, when he knows that he is forgiven, and knows, too, what anguish he has caused to his mother's heart, words and tears come together, and the old happy, loving intimacy is restored. So it may be with us. We have done wrong, and are angry and sullen and silent in the presence of our heavenly Father. We have insulted His love, and then try to persuade ourselves that He is only a tyrant Who wants to punish us and make us suffer. Worse still, we cannot pray for forgiveness of these sins; for it is just the worst of sin that it makes our hearts hard and callous and suspicious. If only we could just come to Him and say we are sorry and ask for pardon—but we cannot; sin has frozen up the source of our tears, and we stay as we are, awkward, shamefaced, silent, and unhappy. Then, just because we cannot say the words that plead for pardon, our blessed Saviour says them for us as the nails, hammered by our sins, go through His hands and feet, says for us the words that go echoing down the centuries—"Father, forgive them; for they know

not what they do.'' Is there not something there, in the sinless Son pleading for our forgiveness whilst in His own broken heart and mangled body He bears the penalty of our sins—in the fact that that sacrifice wins our restoration to our Father's love, and that the handwriting of our condemnation is cancelled and nailed to the Cross—to unseal our tears and loosen our tongues, and make prayer possible even for us?

If we say, ''These sufferings, that death of Christ, happened centuries ago, and in spite of them I have become the slave of sin,'' then we must learn that the death of Christ is a great eternal fact embodying the eternal love and compassion of God Himself; that therefore it is an ever-present fact for us, working with undiminished power whenever we open our hearts to accept it. Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and to the end of time He is the Lamb slain, Who for ever taketh away the sin of the world.

Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. ''To-day,'' after so long a time, ''to-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.'' Whenever by penitence and faith (the conditions of Baptism and of all acceptance with

God) we accept Christ as our Redeemer, God, for the sake of the merits of His dear Son, blots out our iniquities, opens the arms of His mercy to us, brings us back to His house, that with loving hearts we may hold communion with Him in prayer. Thus our Lord Jesus Christ puts prayer once more within our reach through the prayer of His prevailing Passion: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

He does more than that: not only does He set us in God's presence redeemed and forgiven and able to speak to God as God's children, but also He speaks in us and with us by His Sacramental presence in our hearts. In Holy Communion we offer ourselves, our souls and bodies, to God through union with Jesus Christ whom we receive in that Sacrament; or Christ coming into our hearts offers us to the Father in union with Himself. So we offer our prayers then in union with Him, or He offers our prayers through His presence in us; He prays our prayers within us. Because in Holy Communion we just yield ourselves to Christ, that He may use us and work His work in us (and prayer is now as ever His most perfect work), He will teach us how to pray, what to pray for, as we

just give ourselves to Him and accept Him with penitent and loving hearts.

Thus the forgiveness won for us by Christ's Passion is to be the beginning of a new life for us, a life of communion with God in prayer. If we do not go on to this life of closer communion with God we shall not deserve the forgiveness secured by His Passion, and it will be of no avail for us. We cannot claim the merits of Christ's prayer for us unless we are ready to go forward and pray ourselves, practising that prayer which is communion with God, a prayer and communion effected by Christ's Sacramental presence in us.

That, then, which Christ did *for us* on the Cross He does *in us* through Holy Communion. He prayed for us on the Cross ; He prays in us through Holy Communion. If we value and are grateful for the merits of His Passion, let us appropriate them and use them in the Blessed Sacrament, where our prayers will be guided, purified, and offered by Christ within us.

There is one special sort of prayer that Holy Communion will help us to pray—the prayer of intercession. Christ is present in us in that Sacrament, but He is present in us not merely as our own individual Saviour, but as the Saviour

of all mankind. Therefore the prayers which He prays in us there, must be prayers for others as well as for ourselves. The prayer He prays there is, "Our Father, give us our daily bread," etc. So Holy Communion, the time at which He is most effectively present with us, is the special opportunity for intercession. It is the great prayer-meeting of the Church. Through our union with the great Universal Saviour of the world we can pray for our fellow-sinners—the heathen, the outcast, the impenitent. Yes, wonder of wonders! we poor sinners through our union there with Christ can pray for others His prayer on the Cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," so great is the privilege of our prayer when offered at Holy Communion through Him Who is present in us there! Will you treat Holy Communion like that? Will you make it the way in which you thankfully accept the merits of Christ's Passion, by entering effectually on that life of prayer which was the essence of His human life, and which His sufferings made possible for you? Will you make the Holy Sacrament a real Communion with God, in which, through union with Christ, you can lift up your hearts to Him and pray not only

for yourselves, but for all who need your prayers?

Let us kneel down, then, and (1) thank God for Christ's redemptive work which wins forgiveness, and therefore makes it possible for us to speak to our heavenly Father with love and penitence; (2) let us ask Him to save us from distraction and hypocrisy, so that our prayer may be more earnest, more true to His example; (3) let us ask Him that, when we receive Holy Communion, Christ's spirit of prayer and intercession may live and work in us; (4) let us make a start at once by praying for some who need our prayers.

II

ABSOLUTION

"To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (St. Luke xxiii. 43).

FROM St. Matthew we gather that at first the thieves joined the bystanders in reviling Christ. "The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth." But the majestic dignity of Christ, as well as His infinite patience, seem to have wrought on one of them as he watched Him. Though crucified together, yet they were, he felt, utterly different. "We indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." "We receive the due reward of our deeds"! There was the note of real penitence. How seldom we Christians have the courage and the justice to say *that,* when sin brings suffering upon us. How we pity ourselves, how readily we blame other people, circumstances, fortune, or anything rather than ourselves and our own

wrong-doing. "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." He had seen the mocking superscription over Christ's Cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," and had heard the jeering words of the chief priests in their hour of triumph, "If He be the King of Israel, let Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe Him," and with the wonderful insight and discernment which come sometimes with the approach of death he saw in his inmost heart that this kingship was in some strange sense a fact. There was somewhere another world than this, a world of mercy and forgiveness, a realm of truth and love, a realm where this dying comrade of his was King and Lord. "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." So, because he has confessed his sin and turned wholeheartedly to Christ his Lord and King, the words of Absolution come from the parched lips; those arms stretched upon the Cross are stretched in blessing: "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Yes; whenever there is a penitent acknowledgment of sin, and a confident throwing of oneself upon the mercy of Christ, the words of pardon inevitably follow. This may be, as in this

case, and in what we call deathbed repentances, just before death. In other cases it may be earlier in life, when a man has still time to bring forth worthy fruits of penance. But the main fact remains the same. Sin is caused by the rebellious will—when the will ceases to be rebellious sin ceases and the soul is accepted by God. Here, to avoid confusion, there are just two things to be said. (*a*) Only God knows in which case the will has really ceased to be rebellious, has really made its submission honestly and thoroughly ; only God knows when the deathbed repentance is sincere. We do not know and cannot judge. God knows, and only when the repentance *is* sincere is it accepted by God. Do we complain that a sinner may thus be accepted at the hour of death by God? If we dare to do that, we must remember the words of Christ, "I will give unto this last even as unto thee." Whenever the heart turns unreservedly to God in penitence and trust (and only God knows when that is) it wins forgiveness from the Friend of sinners. And (*b*) surely there is suffering, suffering enough to content even our envious hearts, to be endured by the sinner thus forgiven. Do we think that the penitent thief suffered not at all from the thought that his life

was ending and that there was no longer anything he could do to show his love for his Saviour and his hatred of those sins that had been forgiven? I think this must have been a very bitter agony to him. So again in all cases of those who turn to God at the last hour, there will be much cleansing suffering to be endured after death as the saved soul gradually grows in the knowledge and the love of God and in hatred of itself and its past iniquities. So we can leave God to see to His own justice, and can rejoice that this justice is tempered with mercy through the merits of the atoning sufferings of Christ.

The more profitable question for us to ask is: Have *we* honestly and unreservedly acknowledged our sins and faults and shortcomings, not making any excuses but confessing that in any punishment that has overtaken us we receive the due reward of our deeds, or rather far less than their due reward? Have we thrown ourselves just on the mercy of our Lord and King, trusting in that and that alone? If we have done that, then we, like the penitent thief, are accepted by the Saviour, Who bore our sins upon the Cross, and that is the only thing that matters.

You will see that in considering our Lord's

dealing with the thief we have thought first of Him as our Redeemer and not as our Example. In this case this seemed the natural order, because our duty of following His example is so enormously strengthened by the fact that we have been ourselves forgiven. In the light of the pardon we have received, our duty of following His example, of pardoning others, becomes an urgent and constraining one.

But this duty of forgiveness is very hard, because it must be real, genuine, cheerful forgiveness. We are not to take vengeance on the person we pretend to have pardoned by saying nasty things to him or about him to other people. We must not, after saying we have forgiven him, be always trying to humiliate him in every possible way. God and his own conscience will do that. We are not only to forgive him, "but to comfort him, lest perhaps he should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow" (2 Cor. ii. 7). And it is very difficult for us to do this obvious duty. In this matter, then, Christ must be not only our Redeemer, Who has sealed our own pardon with His own Blood, and our Example of pardoning others—He must also be our *indwelling life*. We kneel before the altar and receive Him in the

living power and energy of His love, and side by side with us there kneel, perhaps, those whom we have so grudgingly pardoned. The one Christ Whom we all receive acts as a levelling and uniting force. We cannot receive His love unless we receive it as a love that shines on others too. If the love of Christ is to be a reality for us in that Sacrament of love, it constrains us to the love of His other brothers, and a real forgiveness of their injuries to us is an elementary exhibition of our love to them. Therefore the more loyally and reverently we receive the Blessed Sacrament of Christ's universal love to sinners, the easier will it be for us to pardon, generously and wholeheartedly, those who have offended against us.

But we are to go farther than this. The offences are not only against us—that is a very small matter. If they are offences at all, they are offences against God. So we are not only to pardon such people ourselves, but to help them to get God's pardon, to bring Christ's Absolution to them in whatever way we can. And if this applies particularly to those who sin against us, it applies also to all sinners. Christ our Life demands that we shall bear our part in His universal work of Absolution; we are not only

to pardon private injuries, and to win God's pardon for those who have inflicted them, but we are to bring God's pardon to those who have not offended us at all but are sinners against God in other ways. Christ's life of love in us is to make us agents of Absolution to any sort of sinner against God. On the first Easter Day our Lord laid this duty as a solemn charge upon His Church—"Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Of course these words apply in a special sense to the Priest's office of giving Absolution in the Sacrament of Penance, but they have also a far wider application. The Priest in giving Absolution is acting as the spokesman and representative of the whole Church; and just as the whole congregation bears its part in the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice upon the altar by the hands of the Priest, so the whole body of the faithful have their part in the work of Absolution. Christ Who dwells in us through Holy Communion does, by that very fact, make us all heralds and apostles of His absolving love; we have our share in the remission of sins by our general attitude to sinners. What was Christ's attitude to sinners? Did it

not combine an obvious hatred and detestation of sin with the deepest charity and readiest sympathy for the sinner? Was it not that combination of qualities that brought the outcasts to His feet and made Him their Saviour? But in Christians, instead of that deep charity and that ever-ready sympathy, we often find a sort of sour self-righteousness which repels instead of attracting, hardens instead of softening, and so perhaps retains the sins of people to whom by sympathy and love we might have become agents of remission. This is a matter which we ought to lay to heart. We must indeed maintain an unfaltering opposition to sin in ourselves and others, but we want a more compassionate regard and sympathy for our fellow-sinners. We mix every day with people who are aliens and strangers to the love of Christ. They know we are Christians, and they judge Christians and Christianity by us. If we repel them by our aloofness from them, and hardness and censoriousness towards them, we are false to the position to which we are called of being fellow-workers with Christ in His absolving love. After all, they have sinned against Christ, not against us, and what we have to do is to bring them by kindliness, courtesy, and compassion to

the feet of Him Who has, we hope, by His infinite mercy, forgiven us our trespasses. In some such way as that, Christ our Life, Christ dwelling in us through the Holy Sacrament, may apply His work of Redemption by means of us to the souls of others and so help us to imitate His example and share in His work of Atonement.

Let us pray, then, that we, like the penitent thief, may bear patiently any suffering or punishment as the due reward of our deeds, and like him may throw ourselves on the Redeeming mercy of our Lord and King ; let us pray for grace to follow Christ's example by forgiving those who have offended us ; let us pray that Christ's love for sinners may be given to us, so that we may help them to come to the Saviour by our sympathy and kindness and charity.

III

LOVE

"Behold thy son! . . . Behold thy mother!" (St. John xix. 26, 27).

IN pictures or carvings of the Crucifixion our Lord is generally represented as attended by His Mother on one side of the Cross and St. John on the other. There were other people there; but these are selected as the two whom Jesus loved best on earth, and as the two who loved Him best. That human love finds utterance in the midst of mortal agony; His blessed Mother and His beloved Disciple are in His thoughts, He will provide for them in the time when He will no longer be with them—"Woman, behold thy Son!" "Behold thy Mother!" It is *love*, then, which is the theme of the Third Word from the Cross—love which had breathed in every word and every act of the Incarnate Life of the Son of God. "Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end"; and no

love that we have ever dreamed of was so loyal, so constant, so generous as His. He had won and retained His apostles by His love for them; He had loved them in spite of their ignorance, their prejudices, and their misunderstandings; loved them in spite of the hardness of their hearts and the dullness of their minds. When one of them denied Him, it was love that flashed from the eyes of Jesus to the soul of Peter and drove him from the judgment hall to shed the bitter tears of repentance. When another of them was in the act of betraying Him, His love to Judas never faltered as He made His last supreme effort to recall him from the abyss: "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" We can understand in some small way how the characters and conduct of people, even the best people, must have grated on the perfect refinement, the wisdom, the courtesy, and charity of Christ's human nature. What an unutterable trial their stupidity, their self-seeking, their uncharitableness must have been to Him! When He spoke of the leaven of the Pharisees, it only occurred to them that they had left their bread behind; when He spoke of His Kingdom and its laws, they

started squabbling for the chief places at His court; when He was rejected by some village, they showed that they knew not what spirit they were of by wishing to call down fire from heaven upon the villagers. Yet He loved them in spite of it all, bore with their faults and limitations, and on the threshold of His Passion deliberately bequeathed the example of His love for them to follow—the law of love as a new commandment for them to obey.

Yes; that is His commandment and that is His example, and how fearfully difficult it is to obey the one and to follow the other! If, as we have seen, it is hard to follow His example of prayer and forgiveness, it is infinitely harder to follow His example of love.

It is easy enough to love our friends, but then there are the people who rub us up the wrong way with everything they say or do, the people who get on our nerves, who offend, annoy, and irritate us. How, we say, can we love people with whom we have not an idea in common, people who misinterpret our motives, misconstrue our words, and condemn all our actions? And there must always be many such people about us; we cannot expect to be surrounded only by those whom we naturally

like and with whom we have ideas and tastes in common. But why can we not follow the example of Christ: His patience and gentleness and courtesy and generosity with such people as Nicodemus, or the woman of Samaria, or His disciples, or His enemies? We can only set this duty, the duty of following the example of Christ's love, before us, and deplore with a dull despair our utter inability to follow it. That law of love is holy and just and good, but there is the other law in our members, the law of pride and conceit and self-will and jealousy, bringing us into captivity to the law of hatred in a body sold under sin.

Here, then, we must pass from Christ our Example to Christ our Redeemer, and ask how does the Passion of our Saviour help us in the matter of the Law of Love? The word itself spoken from the Cross helps us to an answer. "Behold thy Son!" "Behold thy Mother!" It is a family relationship which is established amongst us by the sufferings of Christ. Consider how this must be so. It is the work of the Atonement to bring us back to God as His children; through it we return to our Father's house, redeemed, reconciled, forgiven, able to behave

towards Him and to speak to Him as our Father ; yes, and therefore able to behave and to speak to each other as brothers and sisters in our Father's family. If the Passion of Christ restores us to the family of God, it brings with it also a sense of brotherhood one with another.

So what Christ as our Redeemer does is to teach us that the people around us, whether we naturally like them and agree with them or not, are our kindred by the most sacred of all uniting bonds. "Behold thy Mother!" "Behold thy Son!" He says to us from the cross. Yes, and "Behold thy Brother!" "Behold thy Sister!" in just those whom you find it so difficult to love. Surely to impress upon us this kinship, this family relation which binds us together, is a real help. Members of the same family may not always be in perfect agreement, they may occasionally squabble and even fight ; but at any rate they feel that there is a real bond of union between them, a real duty of making the best of each other, and of being considerate and kind, a duty of making friends again after a quarrel, of shaking hands again after a fight ; and the duty has only to be reflected upon to be recognized as a duty of mutual love and service.

So, too, in the light of Christ's Passion will it be for us. We shall not agree with everyone; there will always remain our differences of temperament and taste; we shall feel more at our ease with some than with others. Christian love is not a flabby, invertebrate amiability which makes us express an equal agreement with the most opposite opinions expressed by the different people whom we meet. There will always be differences, and sometimes keen differences, between our views and convictions and those of other people. But that need be no bar to love. Love means that we make allowance for people, make the best and not the worst of them, are considerate and kind to them as members of one family. "Love suffereth long and is kind; envieth not; is not puffed up; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." That is the love set before us by Christ's example, and that is the love which Christ's Passion puts within our reach by bringing us back to God as members of one family of His household. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Then, when we make our Communion, Christ's love becomes our own indwelling life; more completely so, the more serious and real and devout our reception of Him is. His love which loved to the uttermost, His all-comprehensive, generous, redeeming love becomes the very food of our soul, nourishing, quickening, and strengthening the Christ-life given us at Baptism. The love that shrank from no sufferings, which endured all contradictions and insults and annoyances and misunderstandings, which saw clearly all our meannesses and littlenesses, all our treachery and hypocrisy, and loved us in spite of it all—that love becomes (increasingly as we try to grasp and understand the gift given to us) the very breath of our own being. The love which has conquered death and delights to be with the sons of men comes to express itself through us, if only we are loyal, not only transforming us but also other people as we look at them. We get to see things in them that we had never expected to be there. What had seemed to us the dull, commonplace area of their lives breaks up in our gaze into lights and shades, hills and dales; elements of aspiration, of unselfishness, of lovableness make themselves visible as we look at them

with eyes purged and disciplined by the indwelling love of Christ. The love of Christ within us gives us a new capacity of discernment ; now at last we see our neighbour as he is, and seeing him as he is we are able to love him. As long as we were content to scrutinize him with the cold wind of our criticism, he wrapped the cloak of concealment closer around himself, and met criticism with defiance ; but when the sun of the Christ-life in us warms him with its sympathy, the cloak is thrown off and he reveals himself to us as he is, with his weakness and aspirations, his ideals and his failures ; and, knowing him, we grow to love him. Yes, and we recognize that the love of him is the measure of our love for Christ, that our love for Christ is unreal unless it is producing in us more and more of the love of our neighbour. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his neighbour, he is a liar ; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ? and this commandment we have from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also."

And if we find that our Communion—our reception, that is, of the vital love of Jesus—is not making us grow in this knowledge and love of

our neighbour, that means that there is something wrong about our Communions, that they are becoming mechanical and formal, that our preparation for them is being neglected, that we are not really offering ourselves, our souls and bodies, ourselves, our wills and affections, to be transformed and moulded after His example by the power of His life within us. Let us make this a matter of special self-examination before our Easter Eucharist. "Behold thy Mother!" "Behold thy Son!" Let the love of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament so work upon us and enlighten us that in every woman we may see some resemblance to the Holy Mother of Christ, and in every man some likeness of the beloved disciple, and, loving them for *His* sake, we may come to love Him also with something of the love with which He was loved by His Mother and St. John.

In our prayers, then, let us set before us the example of Christ's patient, all-enduring, considerate love for people who must have grated so much upon the sensitive refinement of His nature; let us remember that those whom we find it so hard to love are made our own kith and kin by His

redemption of the human race and have an indefeasible claim on our affection; and let us pray that the Love of Christ, dwelling in us in our Communions, may give that sympathy with others which will help us to know and love them.

IV

SELF-SACRIFICE

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (St. Matt. xxvii. 46).

THIS Fourth Word brings us to the heart of the mystery of the Passion of our Saviour. The strange mysteriousness of the utterance stamped it with peculiar force on the minds and memories of men. Of the Seven Words it is the only one mentioned by SS. Matthew and Mark. SS. Luke and John each gives us three Words, but the tradition embodied in the first two Gospels concentrates itself on this, and gives it to us as the one utterance of peculiar and profound significance spoken from the Cross.

We think of our Lord's life as one of absolute conformity to the Father's will. "I came not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." "Whatsoever I speak, even as the

Father saith unto Me, so I speak." "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." "I and My Father are one." If, then, there was this absolute unity of nature and purpose between Him and the Father, if He had done the Father's will with unfaltering loyalty to the end, surely now at the end the comfort of the Father's love would wrap Him round and infuse peace and serenity into His human soul. We can understand the word "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," as a fit close to that life of spotless obedience, but "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—how came this to be uttered by the sinless Son?

Such thoughts would perhaps be natural if we think of our Lord as a good man who had lived a good life and might look forward to a peaceful death; but then directly we use such words, we see how inadequate they are to His Person and His Work. If we say that the Seventh Word from the Cross is natural and appropriate, but the Fourth Word strange and repugnant, we might go farther and ask why that Seventh Word in which the Son commends Himself to the Father's hands came to be spoken *from the Cross*. Surely the death on the Cross, whatever words were spoken

there, is not what we should regard as the natural and appropriate close to a sinless life. If the Word which speaks of abandonment by the Father is strange and anomalous, no less strange and anomalous is the Cross from which the last Word was spoken. Conversely, I think we can see that, if it was right and natural and appropriate that Christ should die upon the Cross, that death itself would have been incomplete in its power and significance if this Fourth Word had not been uttered, if that abandonment by the Father of which it speaks had not been suffered and experienced. The Cross itself is the deep, central mystery in which all the Seven Words find their meaning and context. The Cross is the comprehensive fact, and the Words emphasize certain aspects of that fact.

Intercession was one aspect of the Cross, Absolution was another, Love was a third; and now we have a fourth in the supreme self-sacrifice and self-abandonment in which He proclaims Himself forsaken by the Father. And notice that it is *self*-sacrifice and *self*-abandonment. If He is for a moment forsaken by the Father, it is because He wills to be thus forsaken. Just as in Gethsemane He could summon the legions of

angels who at a word would have rescued Him from His enemies, so now He deliberately forgoes the comfort of the sense of the Father's presence. Why does He do it? Simply because He hangs on the Cross as the Sin-bearer Who takes our sins upon Himself by enduring the awful consequences which sin brings upon the sinner. And one of the worst of those consequences is separation from God. Adam's sin drove him out from God's presence; and all sin ever since has been a cloud which hides God from us. That is perhaps the most awful thing about sin. We have done wrong wilfully, and at once we cannot pray; prayer becomes unreal, impossible, a form of words barren of meaning. The avenues of approach to God are cut off; we have become strangers and aliens to the covenant. Sometimes people try to brazen it out and say there is no God to approach, as though the sense of God's presence was a childish fancy which they have outgrown; though the childish thing is really not the belief in God's presence but the wilful rebellion which has concealed that presence from us. If, then, Christ is to endure the bitter results of human sin, He must endure that bitterest result of all, alienation from God, with

all the anguish which that brings. And this anguish of desolation was far greater for Him than it could ever be for us. I said just now that Christ was able to make a perfect satisfaction for sin because He felt a hatred for sin which we, who are so familiar with it, can never feel. Christ loved the Father with unswerving loyalty and hated absolutely all rebellion against the Father's will. He felt, therefore, as sinners can never feel, the horror of that isolation from the Father's love which our rebellion has brought upon us. Without that experience of desolation He could not have been the Sin-bearer, for the worst thing that sin brings with it would not have been felt by Him. But if He feels it at all—this sense of desolation—it must mean infinitely more to Him with the exquisite sensitiveness and refinement of His sinless soul than it can ever mean to us dull, callous, hardened sinners.

Here, then, we see the perfect act of reparation being performed, when He Who is our representative bears all the consequences of our sin, and feels those consequences with the intensity which their badness demands, but which we sinners could never feel. "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be

any sorrow like unto My sorrow, which is done unto Me."

Now, in contemplating this Fourth Word, it is mainly as our Redeemer that we think of Christ; we think of Him, that is, as doing something for us that we could never have done for ourselves, making that supreme act of self-sacrifice and self-abandonment and self-isolation from the Father's presence, which makes Him at once the Sin-bearer and the Saviour, our Brother and our Redeemer. But is there here an example that we poor sinners can imitate? Surely we can see traces of such an imitation in St. Paul when, in the fervour of his patriotic love for his people, he exclaims, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." He, too, would isolate himself from the love of God if he might thereby help to save his brethren. So, too, there is an anticipation of it in the case of Moses when he prays that God will blot *his* name out of the book of life and have mercy on the guilty Israelites. We also, on a lower level, are to follow that example by trying to be more disinterested and unselfish in our love of others and in the service which we render to them. It is

terribly difficult to get rid of self and subtle forms of self-seeking in these things. When we are really taking trouble and putting ourselves out to help other people, are we really doing it for their sake or for the sake of ourselves? A poor woman in the East End of London objected once to being visited by a lady Church-worker, and expressed her objection by saying, "I don't want her to come round saving her soul on me." Are we really keen on the good of those for whom we work, or anxious mainly to save our souls by means of what we do for them? Can we approach to St. Paul's feeling when he wished that he might be accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake? Can we set before ourselves the supreme example of Christ, Who forbore the consolation of the Father's love in His utmost need that He might save to the uttermost His brethren upon earth? We must try in our poor way to follow that example by pushing self steadily into the background, and being specially faithful in the doing of bits of work that don't interest us, that don't minister to our pride or vanity or self-love in any form whatever. We clergy, for instance, have to try to be disinterested by leading people to Christ and not to ourselves, by being faithful ministers

of the Good Shepherd, instead of thieves and robbers. As, then, we fix our eyes on the example of Christ's absolute self-sacrifice we can gradually become purer in our motives, gradually purge our service from the self-seeking which poisons so much of it.

But we shall get most help in this way through the indwelling life of Christ crucified with which we feed our souls in Holy Communion. There the example is transformed into a power. The example which was almost too high and holy to be contemplated becomes a power working in the centre of our own being, working to subdue unworthy motives and make love perfect through self-sacrifice. Every aspect and quality of Christ's Passion can be reproduced in us through our faithful reception of the Body broken and the Blood poured out upon the Cross. We have seen how, as we feed our souls upon Christ's Passion, we may be strengthened to pray, to forgive, to love, and now we can learn how the supreme dereliction and self-abandonment of our Saviour can be reproduced, in faithful communicants, in the form of a growing power of self-sacrifice. I want you to see what a tremendous force we are handling when we make our Communion, a

force which is nothing less than the life of Almighty God, a force which when properly adjusted and directed can produce the entire sanctification of the recipient. There is nothing too high and holy for the communicant to attain by the life of Christ crucified working in his soul. "I can do all things," says St. Paul, "through Christ who strengtheneth me." But, once more, it must be Christ *crucified* Whom we receive, because it is only Christ crucified, Christ the Sin-bearer, with Whom we sinners can have any contact at all. And to receive Christ crucified properly in His Sacrament we must come as penitents, as sinners who are at any rate trying to be sorry for their sins, and who can therefore receive all the boundless benefits of His Passion, all the inexhaustible energy of His crucified life. So, if we want to become unselfish, to gain for ourselves something of the power of self-sacrifice, let us be very careful in our self-examination, and see whether we truly and earnestly repent us of our sins, of which selfishness has been the essence ; then the power of Christ's Passion, with all its utter forgetfulness and abandonment of self, will sweep into our penitent souls, and we shall make gradual

progress, advancing in our love of Him and of our neighbour, and thinking less about ourselves.

Let us pray that the love of our neighbour, about which we were thinking just now, may grow into a self-sacrificing love, after the example of Christ, Who forbore all spiritual consolation for Himself that He might seek and save those who had exiled themselves from God ; let us pray for unselfishness as a grace given to us by the indwelling, self-sacrificing Love of Christ in our Communions ; and let us resolve to exercise this unselfishness by special faithfulness in duties that do not attract us.

V

SUFFERING

"I thirst" (St. John xix. 28).

SO far we have been thinking of our Lord's work on the Cross mainly from its mental, spiritual side; His prevailing Intercession; His Absolution granted to sinners; His Love; and His supreme Self-sacrifice. But now we must remember that part of His work on the Cross consisted in His bearing of our physical pain and suffering. And the physical suffering on the Cross was only a special expression of what had been the principle of His whole life. He came down on earth to share all the ills that flesh is heir to, the ills that in some way are natural to our fallen state; in order to show us by His example that all these ills are no impediment to a life of perfect holiness and complete union with God, and in order to make these very ills become instruments for our good, to make sickness and pain a "healing medicine" for the soul.

There is a tendency nowadays to regard all

pain and sickness as absolutely contrary to the will of God. We are told that God, the good Father, cannot will the suffering of His children; that all suffering is the work of the devil, and that God's will is for the health and happiness of all His creatures. When that has been said, it is only one step farther to say that, as suffering is contrary to God's will, and as God is omnipotent, there is no such thing as pain or sickness, that pain and sickness are a delusion; and that as pain and sickness are located by us in a material body, the material body is a delusion also; and there in a nutshell you have the doctrine of Christian Science.

Now such theories, whether pushed to their logical conclusion or not, consist of a truism and a fallacy combined. It is perfectly true that, if sin had never come into the world, there need have been no occasion for suffering, and that God would probably not have willed that suffering should exist. But then sin *has* come into the world; man, as we know him, is fallen man; and in the case of fallen man God does will suffering, partly as a chastisement for sin, and partly as an education to lead him away from sin, and partly also as a way in which we can fill up that which is

lacking of the sufferings of Christ and be fellow-workers with Him for the saving of the souls of our brethren. Sometimes suffering is due to the sufferer's own sin, as when our Lord after healing a man said to him, "Go and sin no more." Sometimes the connection is more remote, as when our Lord said, in correction of His disciples, "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents, that he was born blind." People often suffer, not in consequence of their own sins, but as an indirect result of the sin of perhaps some distant ancestor. There is such a solidarity about human nature that a man's sin leaves its traces far down the ages, blasting the opening life of some remote and innocent descendant. In some way or other, directly or remotely, much at least of suffering is connected with sin, with man's fallen state. And to say that God cannot will suffering for man in this fallen state, which is the only state that we are acquainted with, is to rob God of all moral purpose in His dealings with us, and to regard Him as a good-tempered, indulgent, easy-going person who does not mind what we do and is too lazy to be severe.

Now, as Christ came down into a fallen world in which suffering is an element, it was part of

the purpose of His Incarnate Life to endure real physical pain and suffering. Hunger and thirst and weariness had been His portion during those years when the Son of Man had not where to lay His head, and all that part of His human experience is summed up in the Passion, in the bodily pain of scourging and the crown of thorns, in the long-drawn physical agony of the Crucifixion. And we notice first "the example of His patience"; "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done." "If this cup may not pass from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done." Not a word of impatience, not a word of rebuke, not a word of anger passes His lips. O God, when pain and sickness come upon us, mercifully grant that we may follow the example of His patience! We may be sure that this example of patience has brought new courage and power of endurance to many sufferers to whom Christ has perhaps been nothing more than an example of a good man suffering bravely through an unjust condemnation.

But for us Christians it means more than that. Christ's physical pain and suffering has a redemptive significance and power. Through that mortal agony He is doing something *for* us, that we could never have done for ourselves. He is robbing pain of its chief bitterness; He is making death the gate to life immortal. "O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction," cries the voice of prophecy. "O death," says St. Paul, "where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" Our Lord Jesus Christ has made death something so utterly different from what it was before. Before, it had borne the stamp of sin, and of God's anger which rests upon sin. Death had betokened banishment from God, the sentence of condemnation on rebellious man—"dust thou art and to dust shalt thou return." But when He Who knew no sin passed the portals of death He passed them in royal triumph as a conqueror, passed through them on His way to heaven, "leaving a glorious track where Saints newborn might fearless follow to their blest abode," and bringing light and

deliverance to those "prisoners of hope" who had died in the bitterness of death before the Redemption had been won.

There will always be something sad and mysterious in the passing even of a Christian soul, always urgent need in that solemn hour for the prayers and the rites of the Church. But through the merits of Christ's Passion the sting of God's anger is taken away for those who repent, and there is instead a sure and certain hope that we depart "to be with Christ, which is far better."

So Christ is not only our Example of patience in enduring pain and death; but He is also our Redeemer Who has stripped suffering of its worst pain, and makes death the gate of life. And He works a greater wonder still. For, as we make our Communion, His pain and sufferings become the very food and sustenance of our life. His physical pains are part of that crucified life which is given to us in that Holy Sacrament as that on which we are to live. Pain, robbed of its sting by His redemptive act, is now transfigured by His indwelling sacramental life. Pain becomes a thing by which we live, a wholesome medicine of the soul, something to be not stolidly endured but cheerfully accepted. There was

nothing morbid or extravagant when the Saints prayed to be allowed to share more and more of the sufferings of Christ, to have the marks of His Passion stamped on their own hands and feet, as they were in the case of St. Francis of Assisi. To feel more of the pain and sufferings of Christ was to share more and more of the life of the Crucified, that indwelling life of the dying Saviour, which is our pledge of salvation and our hope of glory. To embrace suffering gladly, and go out to meet it, was to take their own part in His redemptive work. When pain comes on us, especially that pain which is the forerunner of death, let us go to the Blessed Sacrament, or have it brought to us if we are too weak to go ; let us unite our sufferings to those of the pain-stricken Saviour Who comes to us, thus making pain a new bond of union between ourselves and Him ; let us rejoice in the sufferings which bring us closer to the sufferings of Christ, because the suffering Christ is the only One Who can be our Saviour. His strength is made perfect in weakness. His strength, which passed through death and conquered death, is brought to its full perfection, exhibited in its triumphant power, in our mortal weakness. In our mortal weakness, as all earthly

props are failing us, we lay hold upon Him that is strong, Who comes to us in the Holy Sacrament of His Passion ; our very sufferings bind us then to Him Who suffered for us ; beneath are the everlasting arms, and the Blessed Sacrament is a true Viaticum, a food for our journey to life everlasting, and through our cheerful, willing fellowship in His sufferings we have our share in His redemptive work.

Let us fix our minds on the heroic courage of Christ, His absolute self-restraint and uncomplaining patience under the scourge, the crown of thorns, the weight of the cross, the slow agony of the dying, in order that the example may stimulate us to more endurance ; let us thank Him for the light that shines on a Christian deathbed through the grace of His Redemption ; and let us resolve to treat suffering as part of our membership with the Crucified, and as a way in which we may help the souls of others.

VI

OBEDIENCE

"It is finished" (St. John xix. 30).

WITH this word we come near to the end of the long-drawn agony on the Cross, with its mental and bodily anguish, its spiritual desolation and its physical thirst: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work"—that had been the object of His Incarnate Life, and now in suffering and death that object is attained, that work is done. God's work, God's will—what was that but the salvation of the human race, a work of rescue and deliverance, the opening of the prison-house of bondage to sin, the healing of sick souls by the strengthening of their broken wills, and the cleansing of their corrupt affections? And obedience to the Father was not only the principle of His own life, but that also which He wanted to produce in the men for whom He lived and died. The work of God was to be accomplished in them through their

obedience ; by the transference of their allegiance from evil to good, from the devil to God Himself.

There must be some dominant ruling principle which determines the bent and tendency and character of our lives. We must recognize and serve some sovereign power or other ; for good and evil are not abstract ideas but dominant powers, one or other of which we have to obey. The question is not whether we will obey anyone, but whom we will obey. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve," said Moses ; and so Elijah —"If Baal is God follow him ; if Jehovah, then follow Him." There must be a sovereign Lord of our lives, and there can only be one at the same time. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," as our Lord Himself insisted. If, then, God was to rescue His people it must be by bringing them to serve the right master, by making them the loyal subjects of the legitimate King and incorporating them as citizens in His Kingdom.

Here, as everywhere, we notice the absolute conformity between the teaching and the example of our Lord. As He preached that men must have one Master Who should bear sovereign rule over their hearts, and as He preached the coming of a Kingdom in which God should be that

sovereign Lord, so in His own life He exhibited that absolute and single-hearted obedience to the will of God. Obedience to the will of God the Father was the one guiding principle of His life, from which He never swerved by a hair's breadth to the end.

Here, then, is the lesson of His example to us. "It is finished"—the one work to which His whole life was devoted—the unfaltering allegiance to the will of God Who sent Him. Is there in our lives that unity of a single guiding principle, and is that guiding principle allegiance to God as our King? Is not the secret of our unhappiness to be found just in the fact that there is no such unity of allegiance in our lives, in the fact that we are always attempting the impossible task of serving two masters at one and the same time—God and Mammon—whose laws are diametrically and fatally contradictory? Hence we find in ourselves a heap of good desires and aspirations not carried into effect, because the law of a carnal nature sold under sin has asserted itself in the teeth of the law which is holy and just and good. Hence we find no rest or satisfaction in our sins, because the law of God which we recognize after the inner man springs up in our path "to haunt, to startle, and

waylay" as we try to fill ourselves with the husks that the swine do eat. As I said in the opening address, we are for ever unable in our own strength to follow Christ's example, because of the weakness of a sinful nature, but at any rate now on Good Friday, when the Cross is set up before our eyes, there must come a parting of the ways, we must compare the claims of the two masters and make up our minds whom we really and honestly want to serve. If we honestly want to take God as our King, then the mere fact that the weakness of our mortal nature makes it impossible for us to obey Him of ourselves will bring us to claim the privileges which citizenship in His Kingdom brings to us, to dwell in His land with the certain conviction that verily we shall be fed.

Now, Christ as our Redeemer founded the Kingdom of God upon earth, and offers us its privileges, by the shedding of His Blood. Why was that necessary? Simply because God's Kingdom is to rule our hearts and wills; simply because "there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie"; because, in that Kingdom, God is to be the absolute Master, and

its true citizens are to be cleansed from iniquity and devoted wholeheartedly to the doing of God's will. So the Kingdom is to be a Kingdom of the redeemed, of those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sin of the world by the one perfect oblation of Himself.

The work of Redemption is a finished work. It was done "once, only once, and once for all," and as the result of it we vacillating, wobbling time-servers and trimmers, who are neither with all our hearts for God or for His enemies, we, with our weak, divided nature, are freed from guilt, and, cleansed and forgiven, are set down in God's Kingdom to be His obedient subjects. The former things are passed away, and all things are made new. Whenever we will we can turn to God and claim this position by the merits of Him Who won it for us by the work of Redemption finished upon the Cross.

Yes, we may reply, I know that by the merits of Christ's death I am freed from the guilt of sin and am given a new chance of living as I want to live in obedience to God's laws, so that obedience to God may be the very work of my life finished at my death. But though the *guilt* of my past sins

is done away by my Redeemer's death, the *power* of those past sins remains in the form of bad habits, a corrupted imagination, and a weakened will. These things go on in spite of Christ's death, and these things seem to make Christ's death of no avail for my salvation.

But this only means that whilst the work of Redemption is finished, the work of sanctification is not finished. Our past sins are forgiven whenever, with honest repentance, we claim their forgiveness through the merits of the death of Christ. And we are forgiven in order that we may become good; it is all one process. Christ's object is not to free us from the guilt of past sins, and leave us helpless under its present power. No; having redeemed, He goes on to help and strengthen us. "O Saviour of the world," we pray, "Who by Thy Cross and Precious Blood has redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord." Or, in the *Te Deum,* "We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants, Whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Precious Blood." He redeemed us on the Cross, and now He saves and helps us by His indwelling presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

If we complain that Christ's Redemption is no

real help to us because it leaves us a prey to the power of bad habits, this is because we look at Christ's death in false isolation from that which follows; it is because we are not devout communicants or have forgotten that Christ's work in the Eucharist is a continuance of His work upon the Cross. On the Cross He won our forgiveness; in the Sacrament He helps us to live up to that forgiveness. On the Cross He cleansed us from the guilt of sin; in the Sacrament He saves us from its power by the stronger power of His own indwelling Life.

Redemption is finished on the Cross, sanctification is going on now in the penitent, loyal, loving reception of Christ in Holy Communion. As we come there regularly to receive Him Who did the Father's will so perfectly, our own wills will be strengthened, our affections set on things above, and our minds enlightened to behold the King in His beauty. In this way the power of sin will be gradually broken by Christ's indwelling Presence, even as its guilt has been washed away in His Precious Blood. As loyal communicants, we shall become loyal citizens of God's Kingdom, loyal workers in His Church, loyal in obeying His commandments ourselves, and loyal by our

example and influence to extend His Kingdom over the souls of others. For remember that on the Cross Christ makes a great claim on us as His representatives, that we in our turn shall finish the work of sanctification in ourselves and others, even as He finished the work of redemption on the Cross. We look inwards, and see the dominion that sin still has over us, because of our lack of regularity, our lack of penitence, our lack of loyalty, in our reception of His Sacramental Life. And we look around us at the world unconverted and unsanctified because of our imperfect example, our inconsistent lives, our slackness and apathy in doing the duties of citizens in God's Kingdom. Let us resolve, then, to exert the power of the Christian life more faithfully by offering ourselves unreservedly to Christ when He comes to us in the Holy Eucharist, that He Who has redeemed us may first strengthen and sanctify us and then send us out to do His work, or rather do His own work by means of us, speaking His words through our lips which have drunk the Chalice of His Blood, and accomplishing His purposes by our hands into which has been placed the Sacrament of His Body. Then, through our loyal action as citizens

of His Kingdom, His work of sanctification, like that of redemption, will have been accomplished ; He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied ; His whole work will have been finished ; He will rest at last from His labours in the great Sabbath of Eternity.

Let us set before us Christ's loyal adherence to one clear, guiding principle, the doing of the Father's will, which was finished on the Cross, and compare that with our disjointed, incoherent existences, without unity or purpose or result ; let us thank God for that finished work of Redemption which, once accepted in faith and penitence, frees us from the guilt of sin ; and let us resolve to free ourselves from the power of sin through Christ's sanctifying Sacramental presence in our hearts, and to use the new strength of Christ in us for the finishing of His work of sanctification in the world.

VII

SONSHIP

"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (St. Luke xxiii. 46).

"AFTER the dying, before the death, there comes a drawing of quiet breath." That moment of tranquillity has come with the utterance of the Seventh Word. Death's merciful hand is stilling the agony of the throbbing flesh; and (far more blessed than that) the cloud which our sin had interposed between the Son and the Father, the cloud of desolation which our Lord had permitted to pass over Him, has rolled away; clear and confident the words peal from His lips: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." The deep waters that He has passed through have not drowned Him; the heavy burden laid upon Him has not broken Him. Sin has not prevailed; He lays down His life, indeed, but no man takes it from Him; He lays it down of Himself, commits it to the Father's hands.

The Seventh Word follows naturally on the Sixth. Because of His perfect obedience, because He has done God's will for the saving of souls so faithfully from the beginning to the end of His Incarnate Life, therefore He can now so confidently, trustfully, lovingly commend His soul to the Father's keeping. Because there has been no stain of wilfulness or perversity or rebellion in His life, there is this unsullied tranquillity at the last. He had lived loyally as God's Son and dies enveloped in the glory of the Father's love.

Yes, and the reason why we feel that we have no right to look forward to the tranquillity of a good death is just because of all the wilfulness, perversity, and rebellion which have stained our lives. And in one way that is true. Left to ourselves, dependent on our own strength, trusting in our own self-righteousness, offering the work of our own hands, we should have no right to expect peace at the last, no right to appropriate the glad confidence of those words: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

But Christ said these words not only for Himself, but for all of us, not as a single, exceptional man, isolated from us by His great goodness, but

as our representative bearing our sins and paying the ransom for them in His Passion. It is not one good man who says these words for himself alone, but it is God Incarnate Who says them for the human race. As *our* representative, as the Incarnate Son, He now with the last word before His death, speaks to God as "Father."

So we see that Christ's work of Redemption does something more for us than that which we were just now considering.

It not only makes us citizens in God's Kingdom, obedient to His will, finishing that will in our lives; it makes us also sons and daughters responsive to His love. The son who had wandered away comes back to his Father's house. But he could never have come back of himself; shame and weakness would have kept him away. But there was One Who came to share his exile and his misery; sat by him in that far country where he kept the swine and ate the husks; entered with instinctive sympathy into all his feelings of shame and self-hatred and remorse; Who elicited from him the bitter cry, "How many hired servants of my Father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" One

Who entered into the depths of that stricken soul with love unutterable, Who felt its misery and defilement with a grief more poignant than its own ; One Who by the power of His own sufferings and the attraction of His sympathy led the outcast gently back from despair to repentance and confession, took him by the hand and brought him home to his Father's house. The action of Christ's Redemption of us is implied in the prodigal's return ; the result of that Redemption is that sonship to God, lost by centuries of sin, is restored to all mankind, and appropriated by each individual in Holy Baptism.

"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Christ the Sin-bearer, Christ our representative, says these blessed words for each one of us. We could not have dared to say them for ourselves ; we were outcasts and aliens ; we had sinned against Heaven and in His sight, and were no more worthy to be called His sons ; but by Christ's meritorious Cross and Passion we are brought back to the Father's household. "This my son was dead, and is alive again ; was lost, and is found."

Once and for ever, let us resolve to think of God as the loving Father waiting with outstretched

arms for the return of the children who have insulted and left Him; yes, and as sending His own Son to bring them back by the sacrifice of Himself. It follows necessarily that, as we are made God's children by the merits of Christ's Redemptive Sacrifice, we must live and act as God's children should. For the sake of Christ's death, God takes us as His children, because through union with Christ we are going to behave as His children. So here again the act of Communion follows up and completes the work of Redemption. We are not brought back to God as His children in order to be left in all our old wilfulness and perversity and disobedience. No; because He has made us God's children, therefore the holy and righteous Son comes Himself to dwell within us, that we may live the life of sonship to God in loyalty and love.

The sufferings of Christ on Good Friday will, if we plead them penitently, place us redeemed and forgiven in the presence of our heavenly Father; our Easter Communion, and every other Communion too, will bring us into that living union with the Eternal Son in the strength of which we shall be able to follow His example of filial love and obedience. Being regenerate and made His

children by adoption and grace, we shall daily be renewed by the Holy Spirit, who gives Christ to us in the Sacrament. Our love for our heavenly Father, and our loyalty to Him as His children, will not be perfected all at once. There is in us a grossness of nature to be gradually refined by Him; there are elements of perversity and self-will to be gradually cast out; elements of pride and conceit to be still more slowly got rid of. And it may be long before we shall feel in our hearts anything of that glow of love for our Father and the hallowing of His Name and the coming of His Kingdom and the doing of His Will.

We must have patience. Years of obstinacy and neglect and sin cannot be cancelled in a moment. Christ does not work in us by magic, but by a gradual process of transformation, as He gets control first over one portion and then another of our nature; and by our patience and perseverance we co-operate with Him in His work. Let us then be penitent and patient, regular and persevering in our Communions, and careful and honest in our preparation. Then each Communion will bring us into a closer and more living union with the strong Son of God Who loves

us and gives Himself to us in the Sacrament, in order that we also may love the heavenly Father and serve Him with loyal devotion.

Then at the end, when our life's work is finished, by the grace of Christ's Redemption of us on the Cross, and by the grace of His renewing presence in us through the Sacrament, we shall be able to take His own words upon our lips and say, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

* * * * *

In following these last scenes of the Passion we have tried to do three things: (1) To contemplate the example of our Holy Saviour, especially the example of His great humility, and shame ourselves by the comparison of our lives with His; (2) to appreciate the great work of Redemption done for us by His "meritorious Cross and Passion, whereby alone we obtain remission of our sins"—"the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and Man, Who did humble Himself even to the death upon the Cross for us miserable sinners, who lay in darkness and the shadow of death, that He might make us the children of God"; and (3) we

have tried to see how Christ's work of Redemption done for us on the Cross must be followed by the work of sanctification done in us through Communion—that gradual work by which we who are restored, redeemed, forgiven by the merits of Christ's death are gradually moulded and transformed into His likeness through His indwelling Sacramental presence. And we have tried to see how in these ways we could attain to certain graces and virtues of the Christian life, indicated by the words of Christ from the Cross : how we could learn to *pray,* and to *forgive,* and to *love,* and to *sacrifice ourselves;* how we can practise *patience* in suffering ; how we can grow perfect in *obedience;* and how we can advance in *sonship* to Almighty God.

Prayer, Forgiveness, Love, Self-sacrifice, Patience, Obedience, Sonship—in all of these Christ gives us a perfect Example ; all of them are made possible for us by His work of Redemption whereby past sin is forgiven ; and all of them may be gradually accomplished in us by that blessed renewal of our nature which He effects by His presence in the Sacrament.

Let us ask our Blessed Lord, by His Example,

His Redemptive Death, His Presence in the Sacrament, to help us to pray, to forgive, to love, to sacrifice ourselves, to be patient in suffering, to be loyal in our obedience, and loving in our sonship to God.

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